

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 01797

LIMDIS

BRASILIA FOR CODUS, BRENNAN AND HUDSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP

SUBJECT: MRS. NIXON'S VISIT TO VENEZUELA

1. DURING MY CALL YESTERDAY ON FONMIN CALVANI, WE WENT OVER DETAILS OF PREPARATIONS FOR MRS. NIXON'S VISIT TO CARACAS.

2. CALVANI SAID CANDIDLY THAT WHEN HE HAD FIRST HEARD IN MEXICO CITY THAT MRS. NIXON WOULD BE THE DELEGATE TO THE INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ HE HAD "BUTTERFLIES IN HIS STOMACH"--AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO STILL VIVID VENEZUELAN RECOLLECTIONS OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THE NIXON FAMILY IN CARACAS IN 1958.

3. CALVANI SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WAS ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO MRS. NIXON'S DRIVING FROM MAIQUETIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO THE CAPITAL. THEREFORE, HER TRANSPORTATION FROM MAIQUETIA TO CARACAS SHOULD BE BY AIR AND THIS BOILED DOWN TO A CHOICE BETWEEN VENEZUELAN OFFICIAL HELICOPTERS, OUR OWN ATTACHE PLANE OR PRESIDENT CALDERA'S OFFICIAL AIRCRAFT. CALVANI MADE IT VERY CLEAR INDEED THAT VENEZUELAN PUBLIC

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OPINION WOULD FAIL TO UNDERSTAND OUR NOT USING VENEZUELAN

EQUIPMENT FOR THE 12-MINUTE FLIGHT FROM MAIQUETIA TO CARLOTA AIRPORT IN CARACAS. WE THEREUPON AGREED (SUBJECT OF COURSE TO APPROVAL IN WASHINGTON) THAT THE PREFERABLE MODE OF TRANSPORTATION SHOULD BE PRESIDENT CALDERA'S OWN AVRO AIRCRAFT, WHICH HOLDS TWELVE PASSENGERS IN GREAT COMFORT.

4. CALVANI CONFIRMED THAT MRS. NIXON WOULD BE MET AT LA CARLOTA AIRPORT BY DONA ALICIA CALDERA, WIFE OF PRESIDENT CALDERA.

5. I WAS RELIEVED WHEN FONMIN SAID IT WAS UNWISE FOR MRS. NIXON (CARACAS 1697) TO ATTEMPT TO GO TO THE TE DEUM ON TUESDAY MORNING AT 9:00 PRIOR TO THE INAUGURAL CEREMONIES IN THE CAPITOL. HE ASID THAT I COULD DO THE DUTIES AT THE CATHREDAL (METROPOLITAN CHURCH) AND MRS. NIXON COULD GO DIRECTLY, ACCOMPANIED BY CALVANI'S WIFE, FROM THE RESIDENCE TO THE CAPITOL. I SAID THIS MADE ABUNDANT SENSE AND THAT I WOULD DO THE HONORS FOR OUR SIDE IN THE METROPOLITAN CHURCH.

6. I INQUIRED OF CALVANI AS TO THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CEREMONIAL UPON MRS. NIXON'S DEPARTURE MARCH 14. HE SAID HE THOUGHT HE COULD SPEAK FOR BOTH GOVERNMENTS IN ASSURING ME THAT THE NEW FIRST LADY, DONA BLANCA PEREZ, WOULD BE THE PRINCIPAL VENEZUELAN PERSON TO SAY FAREWELL TO MRS. NIXON, LIKEWISE AT CARLOTA AIRPORT. WE SHALL, HOWEVER, DISCREETLY ENDEAVOR TO SEE IF IT MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE NEW PRESIDENT HIMSELF TO BE ON HAND FOR THE OCCASION.
MCCLINTOCK

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